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FILE ONLY

# Reagan Says 'No One' Saw '80 Briefing Book

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President Reagan, contradicting the findings of majority Democrats on a congressional subcommittee, last night said that "no one" in his 1980 presidential campaign saw or obtained a briefing book prepared for then-President Carter before the Oct. 28 preelection debate with Reagan that year.

"I think there is one thing that ought to be cleared up about this whole case," Reagan told a nationally televised news conference. "... We still keep calling it the briefing book. Now, it was established quite a while ago that the so-called [Carter] 'debate briefing book' ... never has been in our possession.

"All that was uncovered were some position papers, the type of things that were issues during the campaign," he added. "And all of it had been out in the open and made public as the campaign went on, before the debate. But the briefing book, if you will remember, the briefing book, it was pointed out, finally someone located on the other side and there it was and no one on this side ever saw it, nor was it ever in our hands."

Democrats in the majority on a House subcommittee chaired by Rep. Donald J. Albosta (D-Mich.) reported that the panel had found evidence to the contrary in its investigation of how Carter material got into the Reagan campaign.

The subcommittee reported:

"Before the Oct. 28, 1980, debate between President Carter and Governor Reagan, the Reagan-Bush campaign obtained foreign policy and national defense briefing papers prepared to assist President Carter in that debate, and also acquired briefing papers on those subjects prepared for Vice President Mondale.

"The Carter debate briefing papers were used by persons connected with the Reagan-Bush campaign to enhance Governor Reagan's performance in the debate. The persons using these papers were aware that they were using Carter debate briefing materials."

The panel noted that last summer, former Reagan campaign aides David R. Gergen and Frank Hodsoll "each produced from their files copies of the Carter foreign policy 'big book' ..." and that other campaign aides remember seeing a more

condensed briefing book on foreign policy prepared only a week before the Cleveland debate.

The report also concluded that it "appears" that the Reagan campaign "had some version" of Carter's domestic-issues briefing book, "perhaps not the final effort, but at least an earlier draft."

The Albosta panel said that some of the Carter material that Reagan aides gathered in 1980 was publicly available. But the subcommittee also reported that the foreign policy briefing materials were "most likely" taken from the Carter National Security Council front office or the White House Situation Room, both "secured areas with limited access."

Reagan also was asked about the apparent contradiction between White House chief of staff James A. Baker III and CIA Director William J. Casey over how the material was obtained. Baker has said he received it from Casey. Casey has said he does not remember giving it to Baker. Both officials held key positions in the 1980 Reagan campaign.

Reagan said he had asked Casey and Baker about their differing recollections and added, "I think they're easily understandable. One has no recollection, and I can understand that, from a campaign ... something that might have come through his office and been passed on ...."

Questioned as to whether an independent counsel should look into the matter, Reagan said "that matter is in court now," but if one is required, he will order officials to cooperate. "Frankly, based on that Democratic committee report, it didn't make any sense at all. This has been investigated thoroughly."

On other matters, Reagan said that his tax cuts had been "more beneficial" to the poor "than to anyone else." He said "the figures belie" the charge from critics that "our tax program has benefited the rich."

This appears to be a shift from Reagan's earlier statements that his across-the-board tax cut was evenhanded.

On other topics, Reagan:

- Said he would "look forward to" a debate with his Democratic presidential opponent.

- Said he does not view as the "death knell" of affirmative action this week's Supreme Court decision that courts may not interfere with seniority systems to protect jobs of newly hired blacks when layoffs are necessary.